Export of Onions

638. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether, in view of steep fall in prices of onion after the arrival of fresh crop, farmers have urged Government to lift ban on export of onions;

(b) if so, Governments reaction thereon; and

(c) whether Government propose to keep in view the interest of consumers also while taking a decision on the demand of farmers to lift ban on export of onions?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Requests have been received from the State Governments of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka for the removal of ban on export of onions. Representations were also received from farmers, associations and traders. These requests have been given due consideration by the Government.

(c) The Government has lifted the ban on export of Bangalore Rose Onion, small quantities of Krishnapuram onion, and has allowed export of 3000 MTs of all varieties of onion to Sri Lanka through N.A.F.E.D. Permission has also been granted for the export of 25,000 MTs. of onions per month for next three months though an agency to be designated by the Government of Maharashtra or by the Associate Shippers registered with the designated agency. While deciding to lift the ban partially, the Government has kept in view the interest of consumers also.

Transparency in DEPB Rates

639. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item published in the Economic Times, (New Delhi), dated the 11th December, 1998 captioned "Exporters must have a say in Duty Entitled Pass Book Scheme (DEPB) rates".

(b) whether, according to CCI's President, methods by which DEPB rates are calculated are faulty, non-transparent and are a fertile ground for corruption and need simplification in order to boost exports;

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(d) what Export Promotion Schemes are available during the current fiscal year for exporters?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) It is not correct to say that the methodology of calculation of DEPB rates is faulty or non-transparent. There is a standard formula for calculating these rates which take into consideration (i) the quantities of inputs required as per the standard Input-Output Norms for the export product, (ii) the total duty element calculated with reference to the c.i.f. value of the various imported inputs, and (iii) the prescribed value addition for the export product. The DEPB rates are calculated and recommended by an inter-Ministerial Committee known as the DEPB Committee. Representatives from the concerned Export Promotion Councils and Associations are also invited to the Committee meetings as and when required. In case any factual errors are brought to the notice of the Committee, these are also examined and the Committee takes appropriate rectificatory